

A new species of the genus *Meotipa* Simon 1895 (Araneae: Theridiidae) from India

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Abstract — A new theridiid species *Meotipa ultapani* sp. nov. is described and illustrated in detail along with notes on its natural history on the basis of specimens collected from Assam, India.

Key words — Taxonomy, diagnosis, Ultapani, Assam

Introduction

The comb-footed spider genus *Meotipa* was first erected by Simon in 1895 with type species *Meotipa picturata* Simon 1895. It consists of 13 accepted species, of which five species, *Meotipa andamanensis* (Tikader 1977), *M. argyrodiformis* (Yaginuma 1952), *M. multuma* Murthappa, Malamel, Prapathi, Sebastian & Venkateshwarlu 2017, *M. picturata* Simon 1895 and *M. sahyadri* Kulkarni, Vartak, Deshpande & Halali 2017 are known from India (World Spider Catalog 2018). In the present paper we describe a new species *Meotipa ultapani* sp. nov. from Assam state of India. This finding is a part of doctoral research work on spiders' diversity at Ripu-Chirang Reserve Forest under Manas Biosphere Reserve.

Materials and Methods

All the specimens are preserved in 80 % ethanol. The specimens were examined, measured and photographed under a Leica EZ4 E stereo microscope. The vulva was treated in 90 % lactic acid for clearing soft tissues before illustration. All measurements are given in millimeters. Leg measurements are given as total length (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus and tarsus). The type specimens were deposited in BMGU (Biodiversity Museum Gauhati University, North-east Region).

Abbreviations used are as follows: ALE- anterior lateral eye, AME- anterior median eye, PLE- posterior lateral eye, PME- posterior median eye, a.s.l. - above sea level.

Taxonomic account

Genus *Meotipa* Simon 1895

Meotipa ultapani sp. nov.

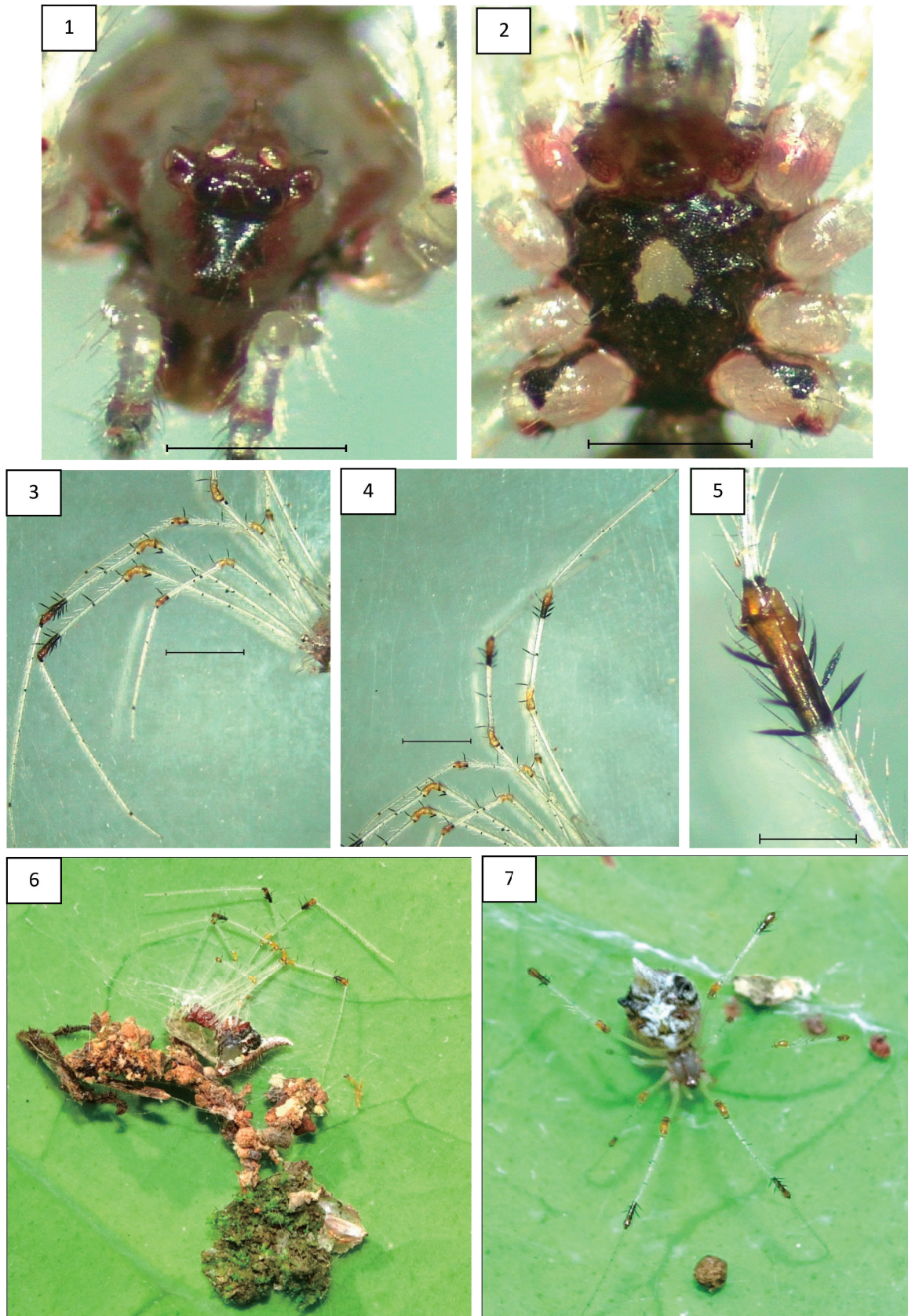
(Figs. 1–15)

Types. Holotype: ♀ (BMGU/A-10/ARA-34), India, Assam, Kokrajhar, Ultapani Forest Range under Chirang Reserve Forest (26° 36' 21.7" N, 90° 14' 44.3" E), a.s.l. 78 m, 21 January 2018, leg. P. Basumatary. Paratypes: 1♀ (BMGU/A-10/ARA-35), same locality as the holotype, 4 March 2018, 1♀ (BMGU/A-10/ARA-36) Jharbari Forest Range (26° 36' 22.8" N, 90° 14' 45.3" E), a.s.l. 70 m, 4 March 2018, 1♀ (BMGU/A-10/ARA-37) Jharbari Forest Range (26° 34' 20.8" N, 90° 12' 40.3" E), a.s.l. 70 m, 12 March 2018, all leg. P. Basumatary.

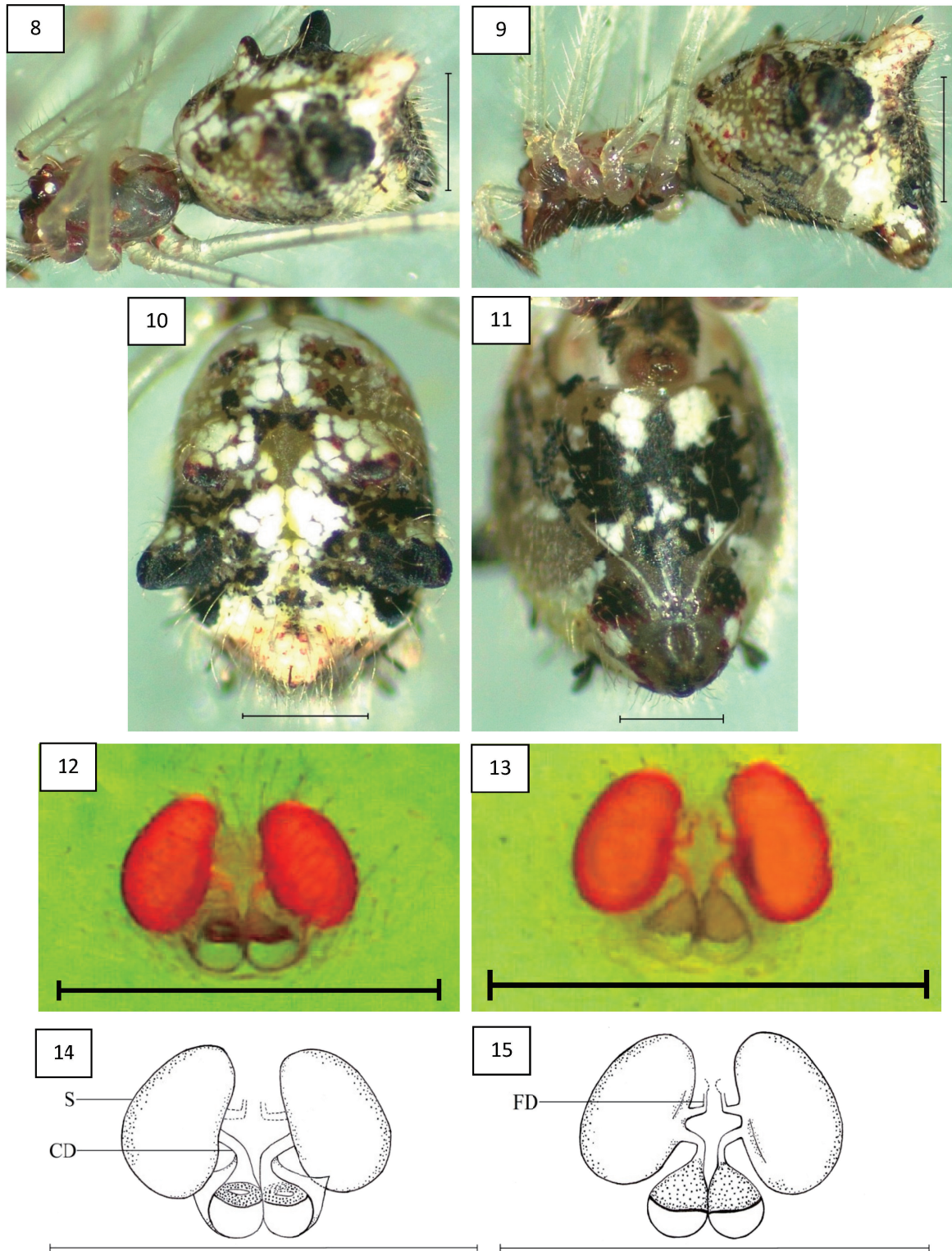
Etymology. The specific name is derived from its type locality. The name is used as a noun in apposition.

Diagnosis. The new species is similar to *Meotipa vesiculosa* Simon 1895 in habitus, but can be distinguished from the latter by the following characters: (1) spermathecae are kidney-shaped and untouched to each other (Figs. 12–15), but roundish and touching to each other in *M. vesiculosa* (Deeleman-Reinhold 2009: figs. 14–16); (2) copulatory ducts are short and connected to lateral sides of spermathecae (Figs. 12–15), but long, forming semicircular shape and connected to spermathecae posteriorly in *M. vesiculosa* (Deeleman-Reinhold 2009, figs. 15–16); (3) fertilization ducts are situated medially (Figs. 13–15), but situated posteriorly in *M. vesiculosa* (Deeleman-Reinhold 2009, figs. 15–16); (4) femora I have one lanceolate spine ventro-distally (Figs. 3–4), but a pair of ventro-distal spines in *M. vesiculosa* (Deeleman-Reinhold 2009, fig. 13).

Description. Female: holotype (BMGU/A-10/ARA-34). Total length 3.1; carapace length 1.25, width 0.94; abdomen length 1.85. Carapace pale grayish white with short median stripes on lateral sides, a pale reddish broad medial stripe from ocular region to fovea and dark broad patch from AMEs to distal end of clypeus (Fig. 1). Eyes raised from slanting clypeus, AMEs reddish black and the other eyes pearly white, surrounded by brown ring (Fig. 1). Eye sizes: AME 0.09, ALE 0.03, PME 0.07, PLE 0.08; interdistances



Figs. 1–7. *Meotipa ultapani* sp. nov. 1, cephalothorax, anterior view; 2, same, ventral view; 3, legs I–II, lateral view; 4, legs IV, lateral view; 5, distal part of tibia IV, dorso-lateral view; 6, live habitus, lateral view (resting position); 7, same, dorsal view. Scales: 2 mm (Figs. 4–5); 0.5 mm (Figs. 1–3).



Figs. 8–15. *Meotipa ultapani* sp. nov. 8, body, dorso-lateral view; 9, same, lateral view; 10, abdomen, dorsal view; 11, same, ventral view; 12, epigyne, ventral view; 13, vulva, dorsal view; 14, diagrammatic representation of vulva, ventral view; 15, same, dorsal view. Abbreviations: CD = copulatory duct; FD = fertilization duct; S = spermatheca. Scales: 1 mm (Figs. 8–11); 0.5 mm (Figs. 12–15).

between eyes: AME-AME 0.07, PME-PME 0.07, PME-
PLE 0.03, AME-PME 0.05, ALE-ALE 0.32, PLE-
PLE 0.37. Chelicerae, labium and maxillae reddish brown. Sternum reddish black and sub-triangular with a white triangular spot at centre (Fig. 2). Legs slender, basically whitish yellow and transparent, covered with numerous whitish setae; femora I–IV with distal part yellowish brown, sparse blackish semi-circular annulations and blackish spots ventrally, femora I with one lanceolate spine ventro-distally; patellae I, II & IV yellowish brown each with two lanceolate spines dorsally, patellae III yellowish brown and spines absent; tibiae I & IV with one dorso-medial lanceolate spine, and distal part blackish brown, having a whirl of 6–8 blackish lanceolate spines; tibiae II & III with two dorsal lanceolate spines medially and distally, and distal part yellowish brown; metatarsi and tarsi without any lanceolate spines; tip of metatarsi blackened (Figs. 3 & 5). Leg measurements: I 11.51 ($4.09 + 0.57 + 2.13 + 3.96 + 0.76$); II 7.43 ($2.15 + 0.49 + 1.50 + 2.57 + 0.72$); III 4.59 ($1.66 + 0.43 + 0.97 + 1.03 + 0.50$); IV 10.02 ($3.70 + 0.45 + 2.19 + 2.98 + 0.70$). Abdomen with two pair of humps on dorso-lateral sides, posterior part protruding dorsally; wholly mottled with white, black and red spots, and dorso-lateral parts and posterior side darkened; sparsely covered with long whitish hairs; with one and two pairs of leaf-shaped flattened spines on postero-dorsal projection and on posterior side near spinnerets, respectively. In live individuals ventro-lateral sides somewhat translucent; and posterior projection long and slender but shrunk in preserved specimens (Figs. 6–11). Epigyne with a pair of central deep pits; spermathecae kidney-shaped; copulatory ducts short and uncoiled, connected to lateral side of spermathecae and curved posteriorly; fertilization ducts situated anteriorly to copulatory ducts, short and curved anteriorly (Figs. 12–15).

Natural history. The species was found on underside of broad leaves of fig plants, viz. *Ficus* sp., alongside the forest stream. The spiders were concealed by building a small retreat with debris of the plants (Fig. 6). Adult females with egg sac were observed during the months of October & November.

Male. Unknown.

Distribution. India (Assam).

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